

Proclamation 7246 of October 30, 1999**Child Mental Health Month, 1999**

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

As a Nation, we have made much progress in ensuring the physical health of our young people. But we are only beginning to make similar strides in protecting their mental health. The symptoms of mental illness in children and adolescents too often go unrecognized and therefore untreated—a tragic failing that can lead to profound effects on their development. Even very young children can experience anxiety and depressive disorders that can have a long-term negative impact on their social interactions at home and at school.

Unfortunately, our attitudes regarding mental illness have compounded this problem. While we now know that more than one in five Americans experiences some form of mental illness each year, that many mental disorders are biological, and that they can be treated medically, too many people still believe that mental illness is a personal failure. Because of this widespread misconception, many parents are reluctant to acknowledge that their children need help, and many children who need help are afraid to ask for it.

During Child Mental Health Month, I encourage all parents, teachers, pediatricians, school nurses, other health care professionals, and concerned citizens across our country to learn more about children's mental health. By doing so, we can recognize more quickly the early warning signs of mental illnesses and disorders. We can detect depression before it deepens into serious illness, raise awareness of risk factors for suicide, and work to prevent more acts of youth violence.

We must do all we can to intervene in the lives of young people who are mentally or emotionally unstable before they cause harm to themselves or to others. I am pleased that some schools have responded to the recent youth violence tragedies by improving mental health services, expanding after-school and mentoring programs, and offering in-home counseling for vulnerable families. To ensure the success of these efforts, we must work to fight the stigma and dispel the myths that surround mental illness. By engaging in efforts that raise public awareness of our children's mental health, we can replace stigma with acceptance, ignorance with understanding, and fear with new hope for the future.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim November 1999 as Child Mental Health Month. I call upon families, schools, communities, and governments to dedicate themselves to promoting the mental health and well-being of all our children.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of

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the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 7247 of November 1, 1999

National American Indian Heritage Month, 1999

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Ours is a nation inextricably linked to the histories of the many peoples who first inhabited this great land. Everywhere around us are reminders of the legacy of America's first inhabitants. Their history speaks to us through the names of our cities, lakes, and rivers; the food on our tables; the magnificent ruins of ancient communities; and, most important, the lives of the people who retain the cultural, spiritual, linguistic, and kinship bonds that have existed for millennia.

As we reflect on the heritage of American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians, we also reaffirm our commitment to fostering a prosperous future for native youth and children. At the foundation of these efforts is our work to provide a quality education to all Native American children. In particular, we have sought significantly increased funding to support Bureau of Indian Affairs school construction and 1,000 new teachers for American Indian youth. My 1998 Executive order on American Indian and Alaska Native Education sets goals to improve high school completion rates and improve performance in reading and mathematics. And we are working to get computers into every classroom and to expand the use of educational technology.

We are also seeking ways to empower Native American communities and help them prosper. My Administration is expanding consultation and collaborative decision-making with tribal governments to promote self-determination. We also support tribal government economic development initiatives, particularly those that increase or enhance the infrastructure necessary for long-term economic growth. My New Markets Initiative seeks to leverage public and private investment to boost economic development in areas that have not shared in our recent national prosperity. In July, I visited the Pine Ridge Reservation of the Oglala Sioux, as part of my New Markets Tour, to explore opportunities for economic development in Indian Country.

Among the most serious barriers to economic growth facing tribal communities is a lack of housing, physical infrastructure, and essential services. My Administration is working with tribal leaders to build and renovate affordable housing on tribal lands, bring quality drinking water to economically distressed Indian communities, and improve public safety. We are moving to assist tribal governments in developing the physical infrastructure needed for economic development, including roads, fiber-optic cabling, and electric power lines.

In working together to shape a brighter future for Indian Country, we must not lose sight of the rich history of Native Americans. Just weeks ago, the